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M.C. - General

3 June 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Paul Henze, NSC Staff

FROM: Charles W. Walter, Member of the NSC Soviet Nationalities Working Group

SUBJECT: FBIS Media Collection on the Arc of Crisis and Soviet Nationalities

This informal working paper updates earlier information on the FBIS effort to increase coverage of the Arc of Crisis and Soviet nationalities, particularly in the Soviet Central Asian republics. FBIS is expanding its capability to exploit the media of the Muslim world and the nationality groups of the Soviet Union by recruiting additional personnel in the United States and abroad, by expanding the capabilities of overseas bureaus to monitor radio broadcasts and exploit the press, by in-house and external training of staff personnel in related languages, by increasing the number of subscriptions to periodicals and newspapers, by procuring necessary reference materials and research aids, and by increasing FBIS' capability to analyze the issues of the Muslim world and the Soviet nationalities.

FBIS field efforts to improve coverage of the Arc of Crisis and increase collection against Soviet nationalities targets began in October 1978 with measures to expand London Bureau's capabilities while the BBC increased its Persian-language capability. The following steps have been taken, since then, in London and elsewhere:

- BBC enlarged its monitoring team from an original four linguists to 12 (nine Persian, two Dari/Pashto and one Persian/Dari/Pashto).
- London Bureau added a Persian linguist to its Press Monitoring Unit to provide current coverage of the Iranian press, which contains valuable information not available from the radio. London Bureau is also continuing to contract locally to provide a sampling of the content of Kurdish-language radio broadcasts from Yerevan and items from the Kirghiz, Kazakh, and Turkmen press bearing on the nationalities issue. In addition, the bureau is slated to start filing a roundup of comment and news from the Middle East and South Asia by the end of August.
- Nicosia and Tel Aviv bureaus each have acquired a Persian-language monitor to follow transmissions from clandestine Iranian transmitters and to provide coverage of Moscow's broadcasts in Persian and Dari and Beijing's broadcasts in Persian.

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- A new bureau that eventually will have the capability to provide unique coverage of a broad spectrum of Mideast and Soviet indigenous language transmissions has been established in the Persian Gulf. By the end of July this bureau should have almost nine monitors on board with capabilities in Arabic, Persian, Dari/Pashto, Azeri, Baluchi and Urdu. Recruiting for additional language capabilities, particularly Turkic languages, is in progress.
- Negotiations are under way to establish a remote monitoring/transmission facility to provide access to additional Soviet Central Asian transmitters, inaudible at existing bureaus, as well as improved coverage of various transmitters in Afghanistan, Iran, India and Pakistan. FBIS hopes to process the material at London.

During the past 4 months the DAILY REPORT has expanded its publication of time-sensitive and current intelligence material from radio broadcasts, newspapers, and journals related to the Muslim world and the nationality groups of the Soviet Union.

- The DAILY REPORT (and the FBIS Wire Service) carries five times a week a concise compendium entitled Focus on Iran and Afghanistan, which lists all significant items on these countries run by the Wire Service during the preceding 24 hours. (This will be replaced in August by a roundup of Muslim world material produced in London.) The DAILY REPORT also carries reports on the broadcasts and behavior of selected stations, including National Voice of Iran in Persian and Azeri, Baghdad in Persian to Iran, and Tehran and Baghdad in Kurdish.

Reporting on the Muslim countries of the Arc of Crisis has been considerably enhanced by the addition of 32 new publications, the hiring of additional Arabic, Persian and Dari staff language officers, and the acquisition of an Urdu contract capability. Additional hiring of U.S. staff linguists is in its final stages.

- Training is focused on upgrading existing Persian and Turkish skills. FBIS officers will be attending the FSI Near East/North Africa Area Studies and in June "The World of Islam" conference sponsored by local universities. A staff officer will leave soon on a tour of South Asia for embassy briefings and an on-the-spot survey of useful publications.

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The capability now exists to scan and translate all the major Soviet Central Asian vernacular languages (Uzbek, Azeri, Turkmen, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Tajik, and Uighur). A new contractor, who has a Ph.D. in Turcology, is available for virtually full-time scanning and translation work on the Soviet Azeri and Turkmen-language press.

-- Training in Soviet vernacular languages is under way in-house and externally. One staff employee is engaged in part-time training in Tajik, another is taking summer sessions in Uzbek and area studies at the University of Texas, and two more will be enrolled for a full academic year of language (Azeri and Tartar) and area studies at Indiana University.

-- The number of Soviet Central Asian periodical and newspaper subscriptions increased from 21 to 41 during the January - April period. As part of the effort to exploit this material, a comprehensive collection of dictionaries in the major Soviet Central Asian languages has been acquired.

The Russian-language newspapers and periodicals of the non-Muslim republics are currently being exploited in depth and FBIS capabilities to exploit the vernacular languages of these republics are being expanded.

-- Documents officers fluent in Lithuanian and Ukrainian are on board, two other documents officers have limited capability in Moldavian and Estonian. Under the guidance of a documents officer, one full-time contractor is comparing and exploiting the daily Georgian vernacular and Russian-language press.

-- Twenty-four Russian-language newspapers and periodicals from Soviet non-Muslim republics are being received and exploited, and 24 vernacular-language sources from these republics are being exploited on a regular basis.

The Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS) now has under contract translators in the following Muslim and Soviet vernacular languages:

-- Non-Soviet Muslim Languages - Arabic, Dari, Persian, Bengali, Hindi, Indonesian, Javanese, Malay, Turkish, Urdu, Tagalog, Cebuano, and Devangari.

-- Soviet Muslim Languages - Azeri, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Turkmen, Uighur, Uzbek, and Tajik.

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-- Soviet Non-Muslim Languages - Lithuanian, Estonian, Armenian, Latvian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Georgian.

FBIS is in the process of expanding its analytical efforts directed at Soviet nationalities and the Muslim world. Since the beginning of the year analytical articles on Soviet nationalities issues, Afghanistan, and Iran have been published.

-- An analyst has been assigned to work full time on Soviet nationalities and another will shortly be assigned to follow Moscow's relations with the Muslim World.

-- Research files are being established for monitoring statements made by selected Muslim leaders, governments, and parties. These files will also include each of the Soviet republics and major topics related to nationalities issues.

CHARLES W. WALTER

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